TERROR

PARADOX

NO. 4
ALL-NEW!

TALES FROM THE CRYPT®

AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

FEATURING...

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

THE OLD WITCH

THE VAULT-KEEPER

NO! THIS CAN'T BE REAL!

DEGREE CONTINENT

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PAPERCUTZ

PROUDLY PRESENTS THE FOURTH
TERRIFYING ISSUE OF THE **ALL-NEW...**

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

BASED ON THE CLASSIC EC COMICS SERIES

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO **WILLIAM M. GAINES, AL FELDSTEIN, REED CRANDALL, JOHNNY CRAIG, JACK DAVIS, WILL ELDER, GEORGE EVANS, GRAHAM INGELS, JACK KAMEN, BERNIE KRIGSTEIN, HARVEY KURTZMAN, JOE ORLANDO, GEORGE ROUSSOS, MARIE SEVERIN, AL WILLIAMSON,** AND **WALLY WOOD.**

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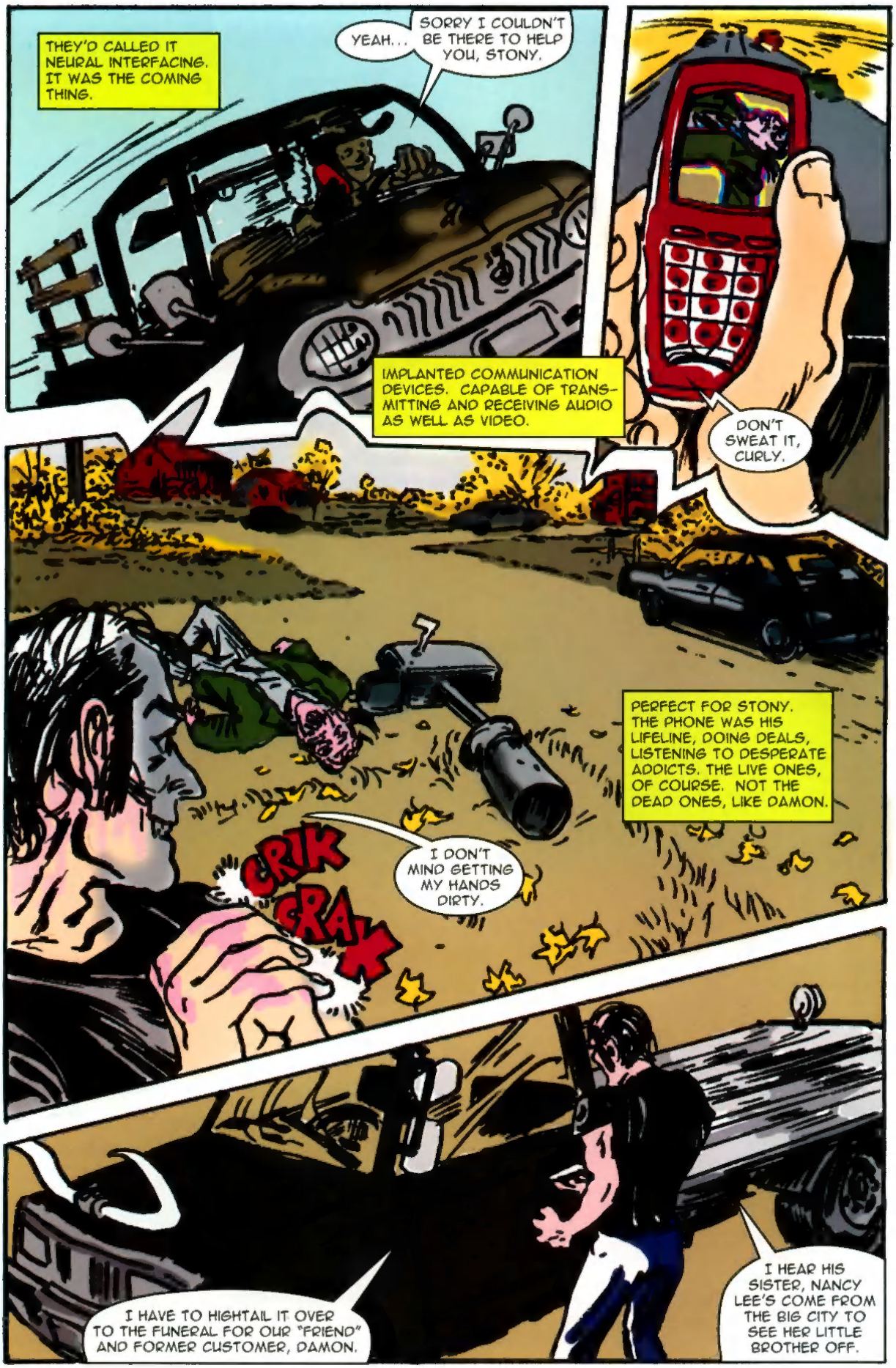
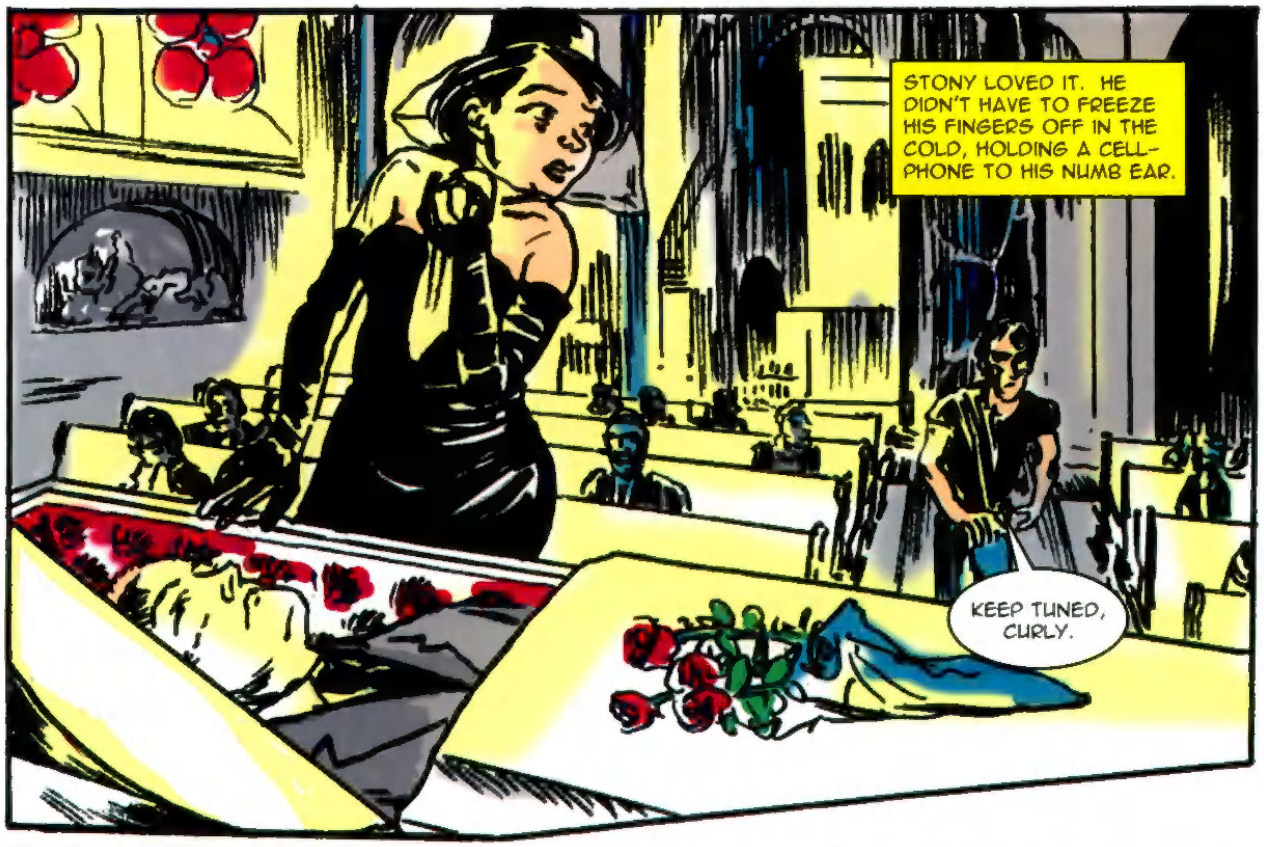
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

FOR STONY BLAKE, LIFE WAS GOOD.
HE COULD BEAT ONE OF HIS CRYSTAL METH CUSTOMERS TO A PULP WHO OWED HIM MONEY--
--AND BROADCAST THE IMAGE TO HIS RIGHT-HAND STOOGE AND ENFORCER, CURLY.

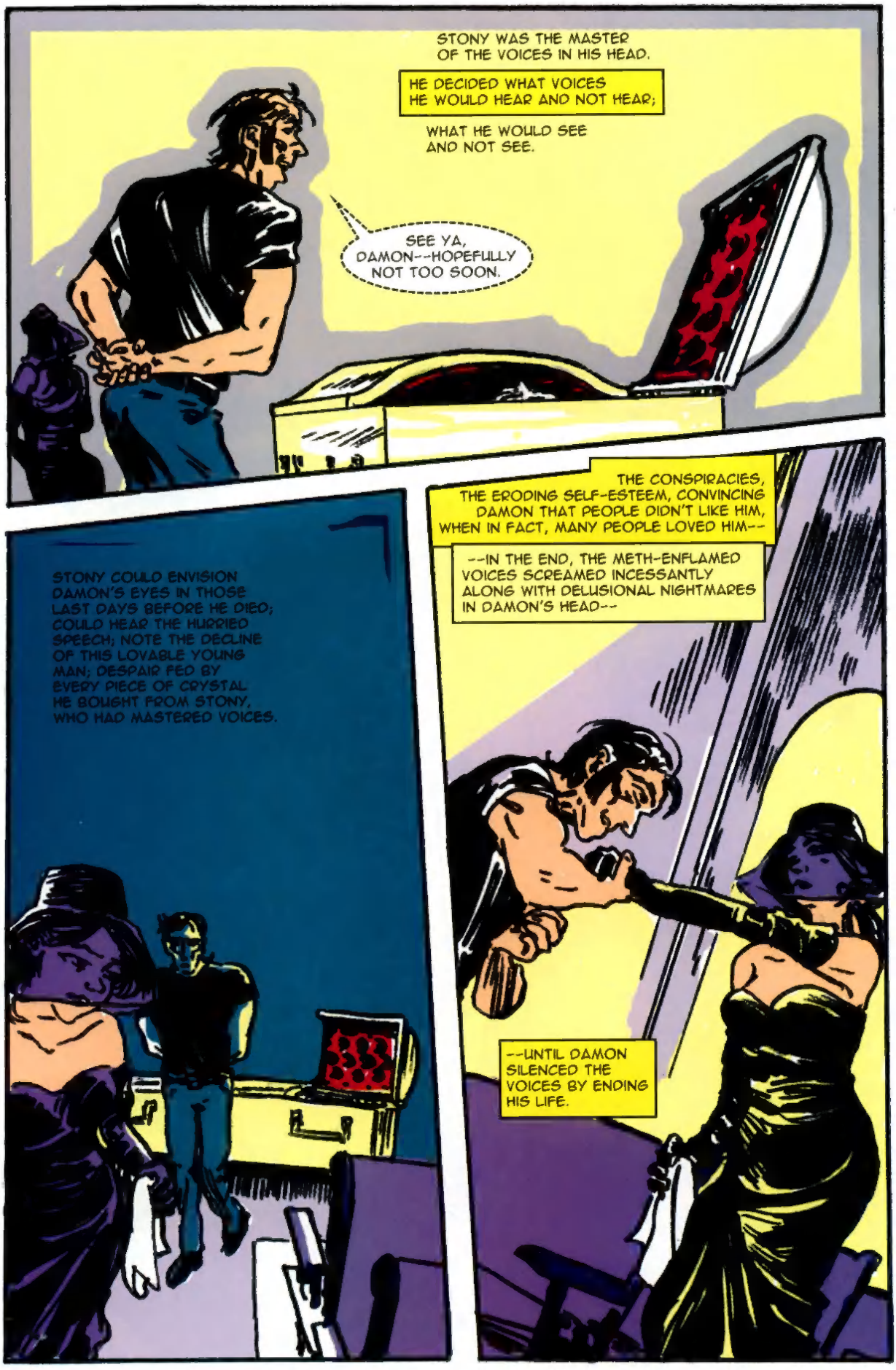
NOW, DRUGGIE, I GAVE YOU SOMETHING TO BE REALLY PARANOID ABOUT.
GET WHAT YOU OWE ME, OR YOU'LL WISH YOU WERE ONLY GETTING HIT BY MY FISTS.
STAYING ALIVE ECONOMICALLY WASN'T A PROBLEM FOR A DRUG ENTREPRENEUR LIKE STONY, WHO LIVED MUCH OF HIS LIFE ON THE PHONE.
STONY MADE A LOT OF CONTACTS FLYING HIS PLANE OVER BORDERS AND STATE LINES AND WHEN RETURNING TO HIS MID-WESTERN HOMETOWN, OVER FARMLANDS TRYING TO STAY ECONOMICALLY ALIVE.
A MAN WHO KNEW A MAN WHO KNEW A WOMAN TOLD HIM THEY'D PERFECTED A CELLPHONE FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE THE ULTIMATE COMMUNICATION.
CINE-PHONE
CURLY, YOU CATCHING ALL THIS?


THEY'D CALLED IT NEURAL INTERFACING. IT WAS THE COMING THING.
YEAH... SORRY I COULDN'T BE THERE TO HELP YOU, STONY.
IMPLANTED COMMUNICATION DEVICES. CAPABLE OF TRANSMITTING AND RECEIVING AUDIO AS WELL AS VIDEO.
DON'T SWEAT IT, CURLY.
PERFECT FOR STONY. THE PHONE WAS HIS LIFELINE, DOING DEALS, LISTENING TO DESPERATE ADDICTS. THE LIVE ONES, OF COURSE. NOT THE DEAD ONES, LIKE DAMON.
CRIK CRAK
I DON'T MIND GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY.
I HAVE TO HIGHTAIL IT OVER TO THE FUNERAL FOR OUR "FRIEND" AND FORMER CUSTOMER, DAMON.
I HEAR HIS SISTER, NANCY LEE'S COME FROM THE BIG CITY TO SEE HER LITTLE BROTHER OFF.


STONY LOVED IT. HE DIDN'T HAVE TO FREEZE HIS FINGERS OFF IN THE COLD, HOLDING A CELL-PHONE TO HIS NUMB EAR.
KEEP TUNED, CURLY.

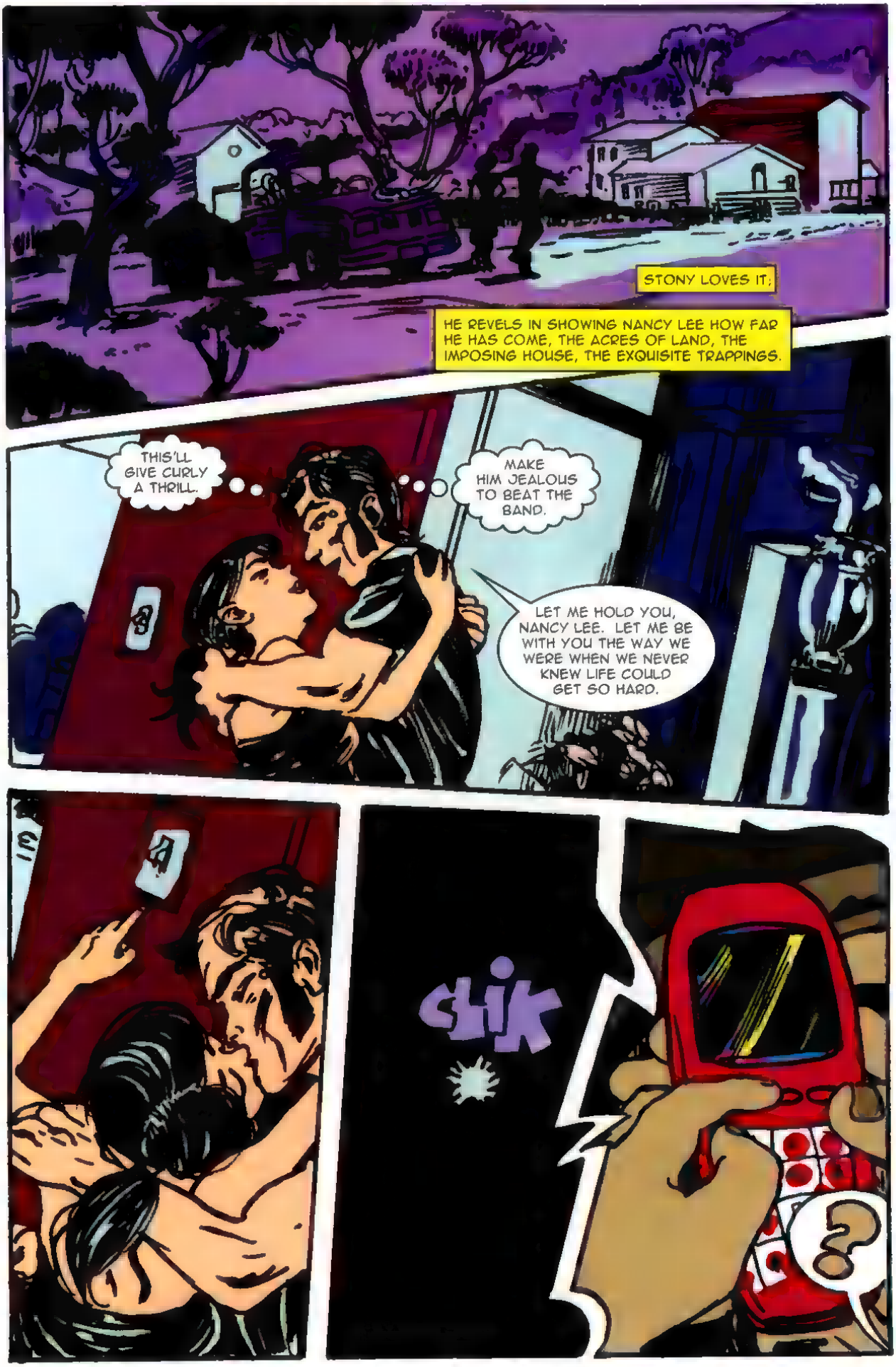
A PHONE CALL DIDN'T STOP HIM FROM USING HIS HANDS FOR WHATEVER ELSE HE MIGHT BE DOING AT A GIVEN MOMENT.
I SEE NANCY LEE NOW. STILL LOOKING PRETTY GOOD.
WAY I REMEMBER HER--
--FROM WHEN SHE WAS GROWING INTO A WOMAN. I'LL TEACH YOU SOMETHING HERE.

STONY HAD THE STRAY THOUGHT THAT DAMON HAD HEARD VOICES IN HIS HEAD AT THE END, MAYBE SOME OF THE VOICES CRYSTAL METH-FED--
--WITH PARANOID PHRASES AND FANTASIES BECOMING DRUG-FED REALITIES.


STONY WAS THE MASTER OF THE VOICES IN HIS HEAD.
HE DECIDED WHAT VOICES HE WOULD HEAR AND NOT HEAR;
WHAT HE WOULD SEE AND NOT SEE.
SEE YA, DAMON--HOPEFULLY NOT TOO SOON.
STONY COULD ENVISION DAMON'S EYES IN THOSE LAST DAYS BEFORE HE DIED; COULD HEAR THE HURRIED SPEECH; NOTE THE DECLINE OF THIS LOVABLE YOUNG MAN; DESPAIR FED BY EVERY PIECE OF CRYSTAL HE BOUGHT FROM STONY, WHO HAD MASTERED VOICES.
THE CONSPIRACIES, THE ERODING SELF-ESTEEM, CONVINCING DAMON THAT PEOPLE DIDN'T LIKE HIM, WHEN IN FACT, MANY PEOPLE LOVED HIM--
--IN THE END, THE METH-ENFLAMED VOICES SCREAMED INCESSANTLY ALONG WITH DELUSIONAL NIGHTMARES IN DAMON'S HEAD--
--UNTIL DAMON SILENCED THE VOICES BY ENDING HIS LIFE.

NANCY LEE, SO SAD WE HAVE TO MEET LIKE THIS. I'M SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS.
I'VE HEARD SO MANY STORIES ABOUT YOU, STONY. DOESN'T SOUND ANYTHING LIKE THE PERSON I GREW UP WITH.
SMALL TOWN FOLKS LIKE TO GOSSIP, YOU KNOW THAT.
ME, I HEARD YOU'D BECOME A NURSE, THAT TRUE?
YES.
SOME OF THESE RUMORS FLYING AROUND--
--PEOPLE ARE FLAPPING THEIR GUMS THAT YOU'RE SELLING DRUGS.
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW, I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT.
TELL YOU WHAT--
WHY DON'T YOU LET ME TAKE YOU OUT TO DINNER, AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT DAMON AND YOU AND ME AND OLD TIMES.

THE THREE OF US WERE SO CLOSE GROWING UP.
REMEMBER WHEN WE USED TO SWING ON THAT OLD SWING DOWN BY THE MARSH...EVEN WHEN WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO.
YOU AND I DID A LOT OF THINGS WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO DO.
WHY DON'T YOU COME SEE MY NEW SPREAD, NANCY LEE?
I THINK WE COULD BOTH STAND NOT BEING ALONE TONIGHT.


STONY LOVES IT;
HE REVELS IN SHOWING NANCY LEE HOW FAR HE HAS COME, THE ACRES OF LAND, THE IMPOSING HOUSE, THE EXQUISITE TRAPPINGS.
THIS'LL GIVE CURLY A THRILL.
MAKE HIM JEALOUS TO BEAT THE BAND.
LET ME HOLD YOU, NANCY LEE. LET ME BE WITH YOU THE WAY WE WERE WHEN WE NEVER KNEW LIFE COULD GET SO HARD.
clik
?

STONY CAN'T QUITE FATHOM WHAT HAPPENED.
THERE WAS NANCY LEE'S WARMTH AND CLOSENESS--
--AND THEN COLD AND DARK.
WHAT IS THIS? HE CAN'T MOVE!
HE'S ON HIS OWN BED, AND HE CAN'T TWITCH A FINGER, MOVE AN ARM, MOVE A LEG.
THIS ISN'T HOW IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE.

AS SOON AS I RETURNED TO THIS TOWN AND SAW YOUR HOUSE, SAW ALL THIS, I KNEW ALL THE RUMORS WERE TRUE.
THIS PLACE... EVERYTHING YOU HAVE...
IT WAS ALL BOUGHT ON DRUG MONEY.
MONEY THAT COST MY BROTHER HIS LIFE.
THAT'S WHEN I DECIDED YOU WEREN'T GOING TO GET AWAY WITH IT.
I'D BEEN ENTERTAINING THE IDEA FROM THE TIME YOU WERE NUZZLING MY NECK AT THE RESTAURANT.
THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT THIS ALONG ON OUR LITTLE DATE.
A NIFTY DRUG THAT IMMOBILIZES THE BODY!
I LOVE WATCHING YOU TRY TO MOVE, AND THE PANIC IN YOUR EYES, AS YOU REALIZE YOU CAN'T!

IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU, YOU MAGGOT--
--DAMON'S IN THAT COFFIN,
BECAUSE YOU FEED ON HUMAN INSECURITY AND DESPAIR!
NANCY LEE, YOU LISTEN TO ME! LISTEN UP! YOU'VE GONE OUT OF YOUR MIND, DOING SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
WHUMP
YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD GIRL.
YOU'D EVEN FEEL GUILTY ABOUT SWINGING ON THAT SWING WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO SWING ON, REMEMBER?

STONY WANTS TO SCREAM SANITY BACK INTO HER. HE WANTS TO SCREAM FOR RESCUE, BUT KNOWS HE'S BUILT HIS HOUSE FAR FROM PRYING EYES AND EARS.
YOU HEAR THIS, STONY! MY BROTHER--

--WON'T BE THE ONLY ONE--

--BURIED TODAY!

IF ONLY HIS CAMERA PHONE WERE ON. IF ONLY HE COULD GET THE THING TO SWITCH ON.
IT WOULD BE A WHOLE DIFFERENT STORY, THEN!
NANCY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
LET'S THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING, OKAY?
THMP
UAAA
YOU CAN TAKE IT TO THE BANK, STONY... I'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF THINKING.
NO ONE'S GOING TO HEAR YOU OR FIND YOU.
AND YOU KNOW IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS, STONY--
--NO ONE HEREABOUTS IS REALLY GOING TO LOOK FOR YOU TOO HARD.
UNF!

VRROOOMMMMM
STONY!
STONY ALMOST HAS A HEART ATTACK WHEN HE HEARS CURLY'S VOICE, LOUD WITH CONCERN IN HIS EAR.
THE CAMERA PHONE! IT'S ON! MUST HAVE TRIGGERED THE MECHANISM WHEN HE WHACKED HIS HEAD INTO THE COFFIN BOTTOM!
STONY, CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? CAN YOU HEAR..?
I HEAR YOU, CURLY. CAN YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?
YEAH. NIGHT SKY! WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT HAPPENED?
IT'S THE CRAZY SISTER, CURLY!
SHE'S GOT ME ZONKED OUT ON SOME KIND OF DRUG.
I DON'T EVEN HAVE THE TWITCH OF A DEATH NERVE, THAT'S HOW STRONG THIS STUFF IS!

WE'RE GOING OFF ROAD, CURLY! YOU SEE THAT?
WHAT I'M STILL SEEING IS JUST NIGHT SKY WHIZZING BY.
LISTEN, CURLY, THIS NUTSO'S GOT ME IN A COFFIN. YOU HEAR THAT?
YOU REALLY GOTTA HEAR ME NOW! NO FOOLING AROUND!
FIND ME!
YOU HAFTA GIVE ME SOMETHING TO GO ON!
I MEAN, FROM THE STARS, APPEARS TO ME YOUR TRAVELING NORTHWEST.
BUT THERE'S A WHOLE LOTTA NORTHWEST OUT HERE!

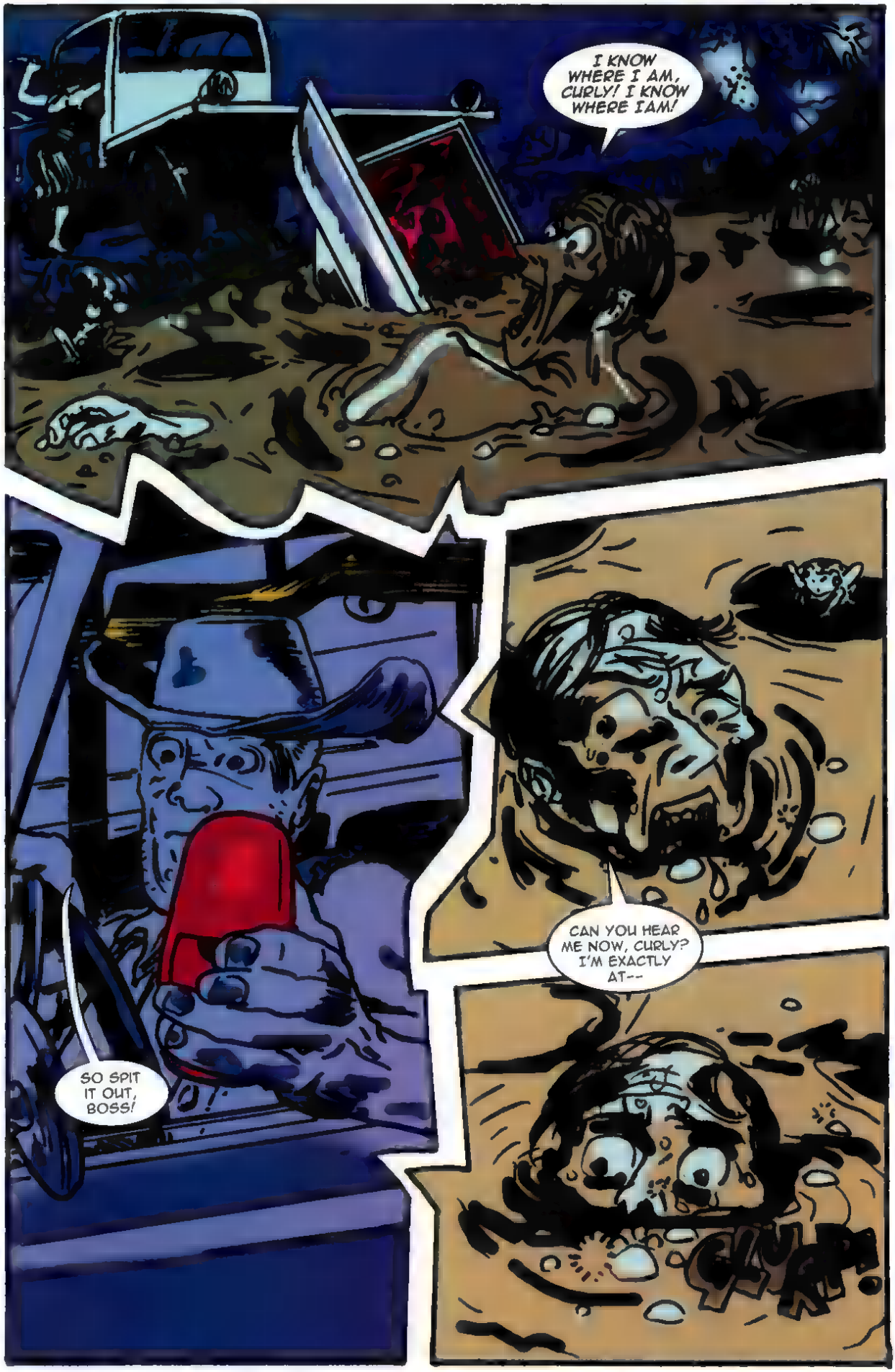
SSCREECH
UH, OH.

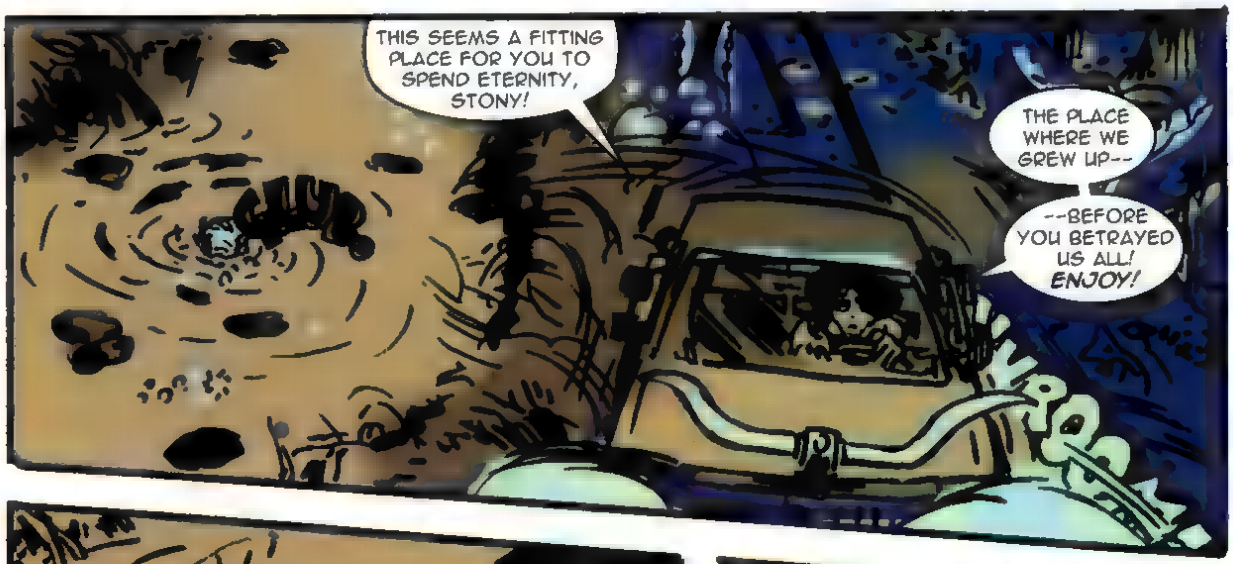
UH, OH, WHAT?

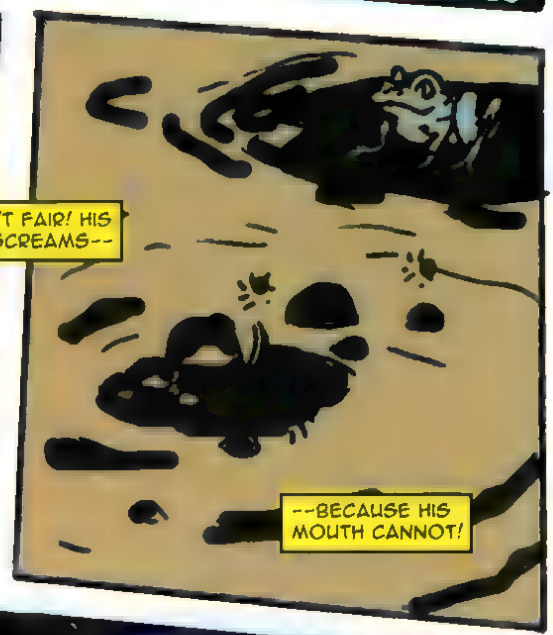
WE'RE STOPPING! I SMELL...SWAMP. MARSHLAND.
YOU GET THAT, CURLY?
YEAH, I GOT IT, BUT WHAT GOOD'S IT GONNA DO ME 'LESS YOU CAN GIVE ME SOME SORT OF LANDMARK.
THERE'RE MILES OF SWAMP AND MOSQUITOES.

AH! I SEE YOU GOT YOUR PHONE WORKING AGAIN. FOR A MINUTE I WAS AFRAID YOU'D LOST YOUR MIND AND WERE BABBLING TO YOUR-SELF.
YOU KNOW ABOUT MY EMBEDDED CAMERA PHONE?
SINCE ABOUT THE TIME YOU WERE NUZZLING MY NECK FOR YOUR AUDIENCE.
THAT'S GOOD.
YOU'LL HAVE COMPANY TO SEE YOU THROUGH TO THE END.
THEY'LL KNOW YOUR FATE!
THAT COULD BE A GOOD THING.
MAYBE WHOEVER'S ON THE OTHER END WILL SEE THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS.
REALIZE THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS TO LEECHES LIKE YOU!

OH, MAN, CURLY! SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING! SHE'S SHOVING THE COFFIN OFF THE TRUCK.
YOU GIMME ONE CLUE THAT PINPOINTS WHERE YOU ARE, BOSS, AND I'M THERE!
I'M TRYING TO SEE!
THE COFFIN'S TILTING, MAYBE, I'LL SEE SOMETHING THEN!
WAITAMINNIT!
I...I SEE SOMETHING.
SPLICH!
WHAT IS THAT?


I KNOW WHERE I AM, CURLY! I KNOW WHERE I AM!
CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW, CURLY? I'M EXACTLY AT--
SO SPIT IT OUT, BOSS!





CURLY SQUINTS AT WHAT IS IN THE CENTER OF THE SMALL IMAGE. WHAT IS THAT?

A CHILD'S SWING?

FRAME IT AS A USELESS NORMAN ROCKWELL SCENE? FOR CURLY, IT'S ABOUT AS FAR REMOVED FROM HIS WORLD AS THAT PAINTING. IT MEANS NOTHING. NOTHING AT ALL.

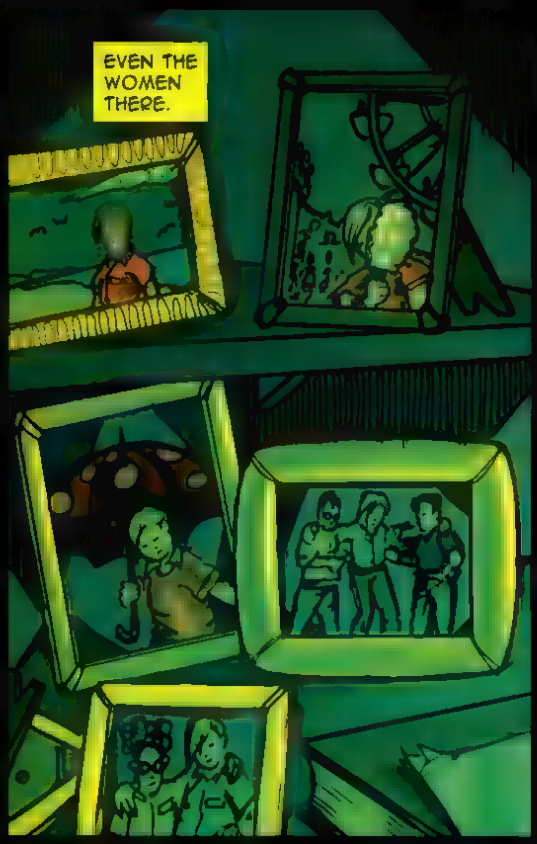
CAN YOU FEAR ME NOW?
GOOD ONE, OLD WITCH! I REALLY DUG IT - AND STONEY'S HEAD-PHONE, TOO!
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT C-K ISN'T A PARTICULARLY GRACIOUS HOST. WHEN HE'S ONLINE IT'S AS IF HE'S IN ANOTHER WORLD! I SUSPECT HE'S AVOIDING US!

I CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR HIS NEXT SCARY STORY! MAYBE I'LL JUST LOOK INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT #4 - IF I CAN JUST GET IT OUT OF THIS PLASTIC CASE...!
NOOOO! VAULT-KEEPER, YOU OLD ROTTING IGNORAMUS! YOU'RE TAMPERING WITH REALITY! WE CAN'T EXIST IN MORE THAN ONE WORLD AT A TIME!

THEN FORGET IT!
JUST CHECK OUT WHAT HAPPENS TO ANDY DABBSTEIN WHEN HE GETS MIXED UP WITH HAVING AN...
EXTRA LIFE!
PLOP!

I'VE BEEN DEAD FOR HOURS.
KILLED BY MY FRIENDS, ROBBED OF EVERYTHING I OWNED, I'M THE LATE, ONCE-GREAT, ANDY DABBSTEIN.
AND SITTING HERE ?? SCARED AND SWEATING-- ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS HOW TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.
HOW TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING FOR REAL.

I WAS BORN ANDREW FRANCIS DABBSTEIN BUT I HAD A SECOND NAME. ANOTHER LIFE.
LIVING TWO LIVES WASN'T EASY. ALMOST LIKE A CHEATER, JUGGLING TO KEEP A WIFE AND GIRL-FRIEND APART.
I NEVER CHEATED ON CAMMY, THOUGH. SHE KNEW EVERY DETAIL ABOUT MY LIFE...AND MY OTHER LIFE.
OGRE CONTINENT


EVEN THE WOMEN THERE.

CAMMY'S GONE NOW. AS ARE THE OTHER WOMEN. THEY'RE GONE AND I'M DEAD.
I WAS HONEST TO THEM ABOUT MY DUAL LIVES AND BECAUSE OF THAT, MY WORLDS COLLIDED.
OGRE

BECAUSE OF THAT I WAS KILLED ON THE BALROGTH PLAINS.
OGRE CONTINENT
OGRE CONTINENT

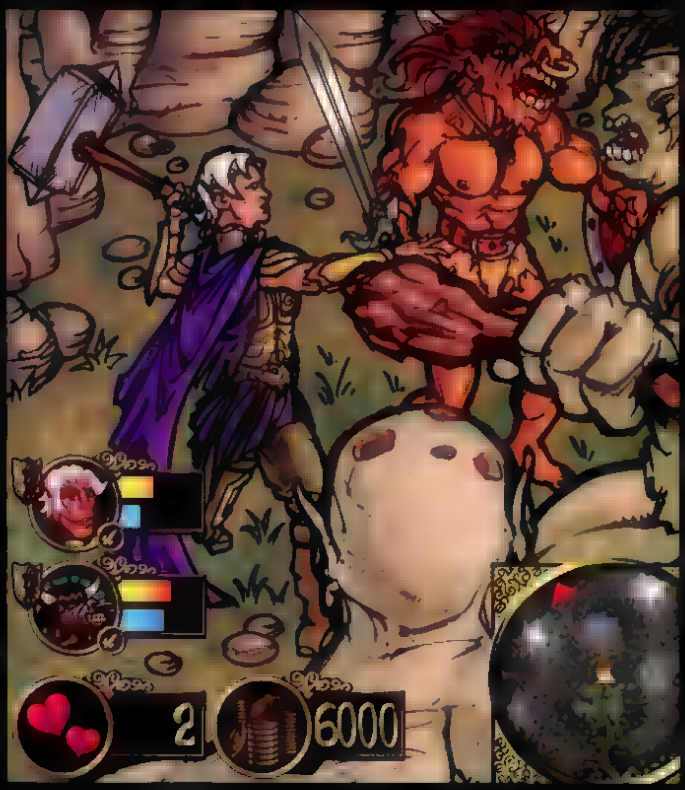
ONLINE, I WAS *EVENBLADE*, A LEVEL TEN PALADIN.
EVENBLADE ROAMED THE OGRE CONTINENT, SEARCHING FOR ADVENTURE.
12
2111

OFFLINE, I WAS ANDY. WORKER ANDY. LOYAL BOYFRIEND ANDY. GOOD OL', NOBODY ANDY.
I HATED ANDY.

I SPENT MORE TIME IN MY EXTRA LIFE THAN WITH ANDY'S APARTMENT, ANNOYED GIRLFRIEND AND TEDIOUS JOB.
EVENBLADE HAD A LOYAL FELLOWSHIP OF FRIENDS. EVENBLADE HAD A CAVE OF RICHES. EVENBLADE HAD HIS ADMIRING GIRLFRIEND, *KYRA RAVENHAIR*.
I HAVE NONE OF THOSE THINGS NOW. ANDY'S *OR* EVENBLADE'S.
AND SOON... SOON, I WON'T EVEN HAVE ME.
22
84

CAMMY DIDN'T LIKE EVENBLADE. SHE WAS AN ANDY GIRL.
THAT SUNDAY, THOUGH, SHE *HATED* ANDY. HIS LACK OF DRIVE. HIS LACK OF INITIATIVE.

I NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT. EVENBLADE HAD INITIATIVE AND SHE HATED EVENBLADE.
SHE COULD BE SO *FRUSTRATING!*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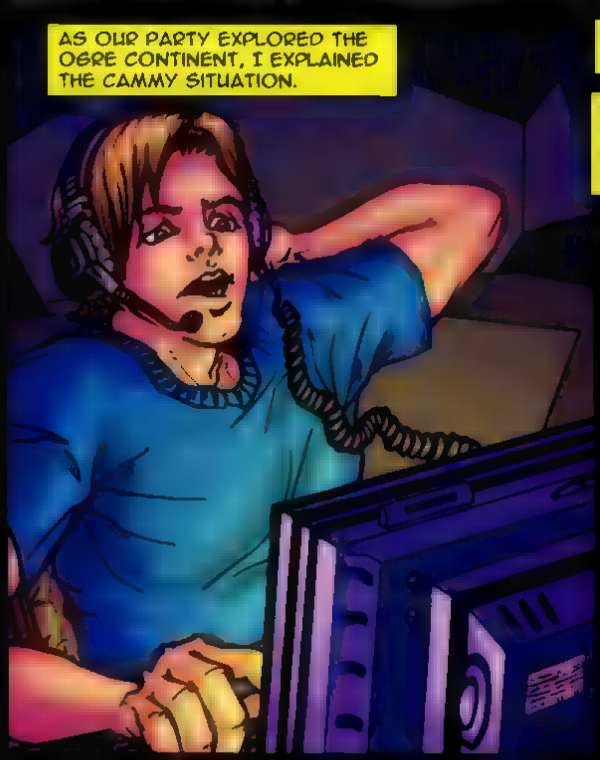
THAT NIGHT IT WASN'T EVENBLADE WHO KILLED FIFTY BALTHGORIAN OGRES AND WON 800 GOLD P.
IT WAS *ANDY*.

THAT DAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME, ANDY WALKED THE BLASTED LANDS. . .AND SINCE OUR FELLOWSHIP SHARED A BOND, I UNBURDENED MYSELF TO THEM.
22
6051


AS OUR PARTY EXPLORED THE OGRE CONTINENT, I EXPLAINED THE CAMMY SITUATION.

AND EVENBLADE PAID THE PRICE.
HIS GUARD DOWN, SOMEONE LIFTED 600 GOLD P FROM HIS CHAINLINK BELT.
22
5251

ANDY'S WALLET WENT MISSING THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

WITHOUT A METROCARD OR CAB FARE, I HAD TO WALK TO WORK.
CAMMY WOULDN'T LOAN ME THE CASH. SHE WAS STILL ANGRY.
SHE BLAMED ME FOR LOSING THE WALLET, CALLING ME CARELESS AND IRRESPONSIBLE.

ANDY GOT A GOODBYE KISS.

LATER THAT NIGHT, AS CAMMY SLEPT, ANDY UNBURDENED HIS HEART TO KYRA RAVENHAIR.
I REVEALED PERSONAL SECRETS I HADN'T TOLD ANYONE. EVEN CAMMY.
22
4411

BY THE NEXT MORNING, EVERYTHING WAS FINE.
CAMMY AND I MADE UP.

ANDY GOT A GOODBYE KISS.
AND EVENBLADE EMBARKED ON A WRAITH HUNT.

KYRA JOINED THE FELLOWSHIP AS WE SEARCHED FOR BLOODWRAITH GOLD AND VAMPIRE BATS.
12
8111

WE ENCOUNTERED A WRAITH PACK IN THE THIRD CAVERN.

HORKUN THE MINOTAUR AND KYRA RETREATED, BUT *STEELHEART67* AND I FOUGHT ON, EARNING 400P EACH.

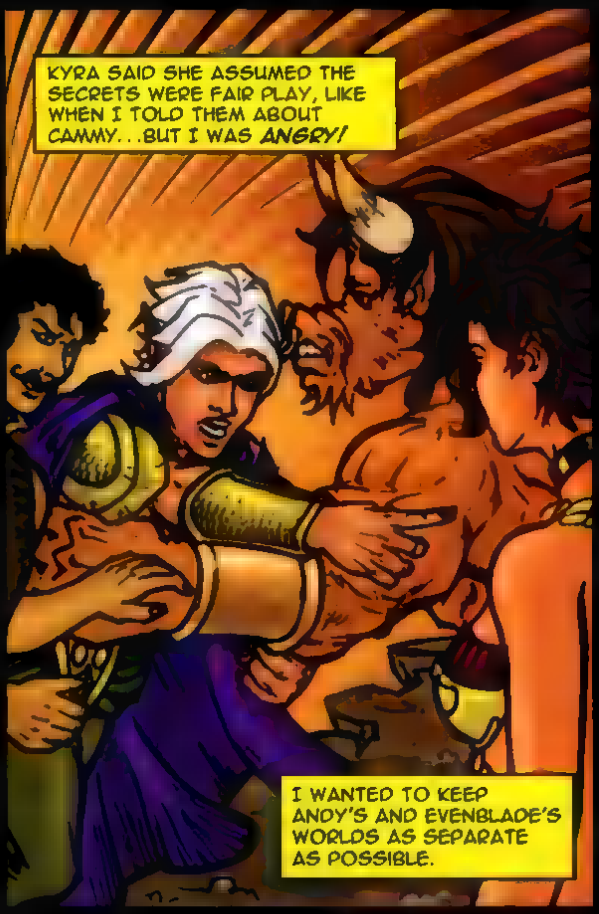
12

8411

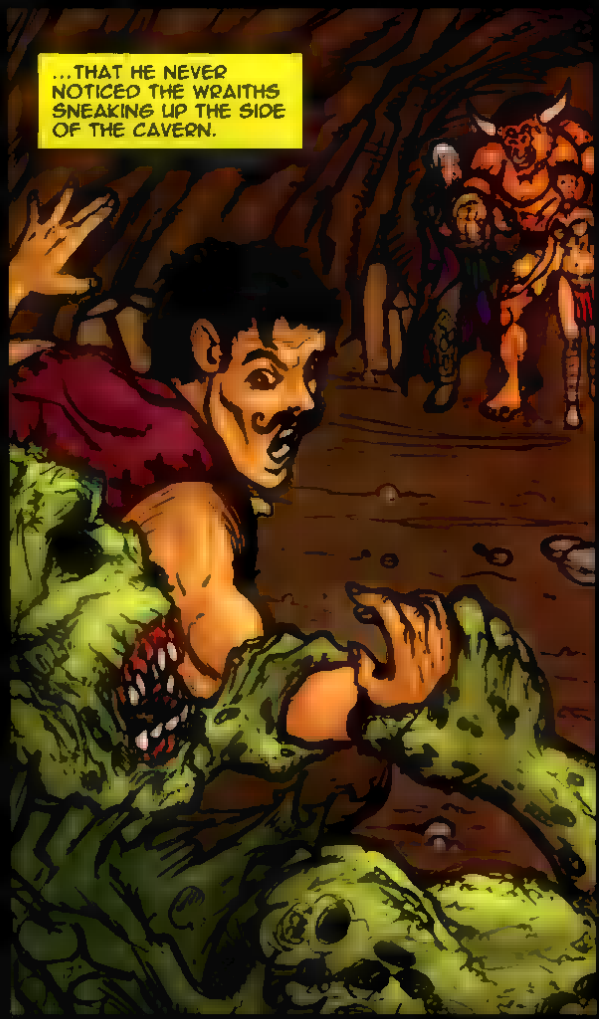
WHILE WE WAITED FOR THE REMAINING WRAITHS TO TIRE AND WANDER OFF, WE PASSED THE TIME.

AND THEN STEELHEART STARTED JOKING ABOUT SECRETS FROM ANDY'S PERSONAL LIFE.

SECRETS I HAD TOLD KYRA IN CONFIDENCE THE NIGHT BEFORE.


KYRA SAID SHE ASSUMED THE SECRETS WERE FAIR PLAY, LIKE WHEN I TOLD THEM ABOUT CAMMY...BUT I WAS ANGRY!
I WANTED TO KEEP ANDY'S AND EVENBLADE'S WORLDS AS SEPARATE AS POSSIBLE.

STEELHEART67 WAS SO ABSORBED IN OUR ARGUMENT...


...THAT HE NEVER NOTICED THE WRAITHS SNEAKING UP THE SIDE OF THE CAVERN.

HORKUN AND I FOUGHT THEM BACK, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.
MY PROBLEMS HAD COST STEELHEART67 HIS ARM.

AND THE NEXT DAY, HE WAS GONE.
WOUNDED AND DISILLUSIONED, STEELBLADE67 RAN A SOLO CAMPAIGN AND WAS KILLED BY A HORDE OF GOBLINS.
12
8211

KYRA AND I AVOIDED EACH OTHER. SHE WAS MORTIFIED AND I FELT BETRAYED.
BOTH OF ME.

FEELING UNINSPIRED, I LEFT EARLY FOR WORK.
CAMMY'D BEEN GONE FOR HOURS AND SINCE WE COULDN'T SHARE A CAB, I TOOK THE 'A' TRAIN.

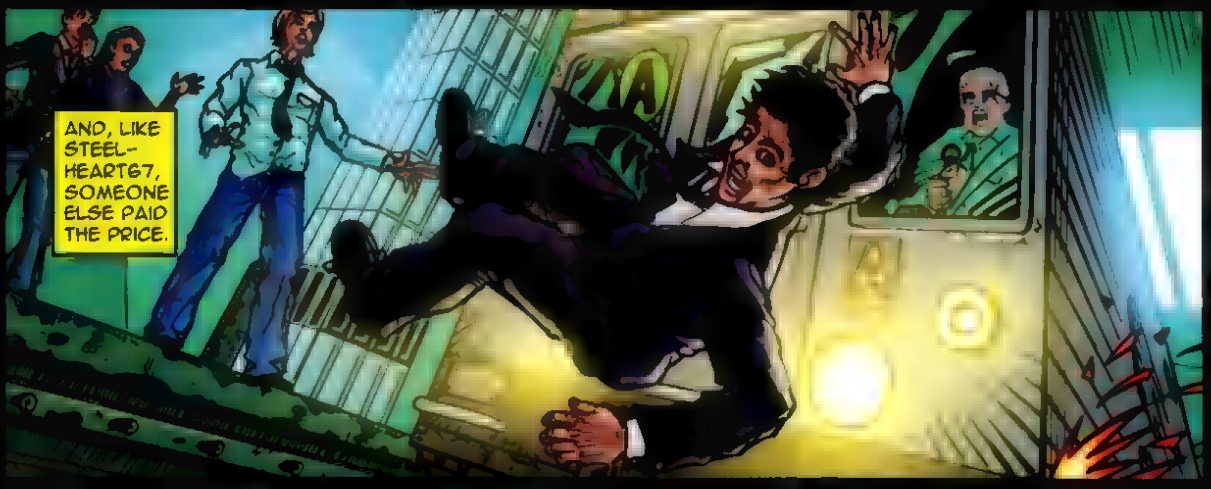
MY HEAD WAS SO FILLED WITH KYRA'S BETRAYAL THAT I DIDN'T NOTICE PEOPLE LAUGHING AT ME UNTIL THE TRAIN PULLED INTO THE STATION.

ONE OF THE MEN BEHIND ME WHISPERED SOMETHING TO HIS FRIEND, A LITTLE SECRET JOKE.
BUT IT WAS NO SECRET TO ME.

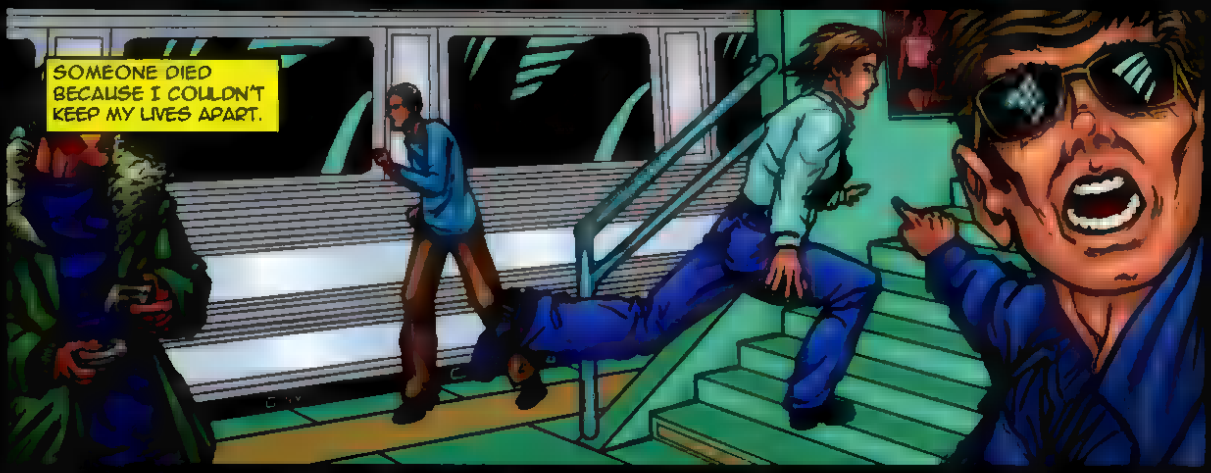
HE WAS WHISPERING A PRIVATE FANTASY I'D TOLD KYRA THE OTHER NIGHT. ONE OF THE SECRETS THAT HAD COST STEELBLADE67'S LIFE.
FUMING, I ASKED HIM HOW HE KNEW?! WHO HAD TOLD HIM?
Peter M.J.
HERMKE FOREVER!

DID HE WALK THE OGRE CONTINENT? DID HE KNOW KYRA? WAS HE STEELBLADE67?
BUT HE JUST LAUGHED AT ME.

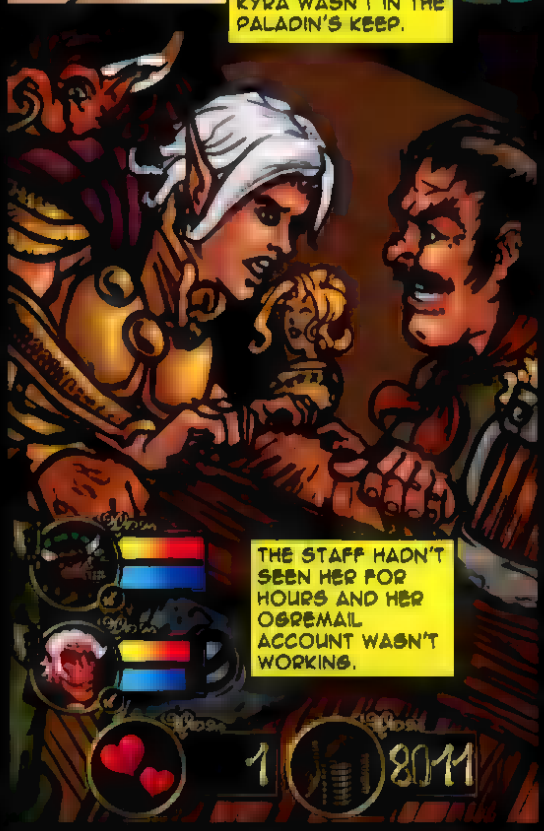
THE HARDER HE LAUGHED, THE ANGRIER I GOT.
ANDY WAS HURT AND BETRAYED.
EVENBLADE WAS HURT AND BETRAYED.


AND, LIKE STEEL-HEART67, SOMEONE ELSE PAID THE PRICE.

SOMEONE IN ANDY'S WORLD DIED AT EVENBLADE'S HANDS.


SOMEONE DIED BECAUSE I COULDN'T KEEP MY LIVES APART.

MY SECRETS HAD KILLED TWO PEOPLE, EACH IN A DIFFERENT WORLD.
EVENTS IN EVENBLADE'S LIFE WERE AFFECTING ANDY'S AND THE ANSWERS COULD ONLY BE FOUND ONLINE.


KYRA WASN'T IN THE PALADIN'S KEEP.
THE STAFF HADN'T SEEN HER FOR HOURS AND HER OGREMAIL ACCOUNT WASN'T WORKING.
1
8011

HORKUN CONFIRMED IT AFTER OUR DISASTROUS HUNT, SHE'D CANCELLED HER OGRE CONTINENT SERVICE. AS FAR AS WE MATTERED, KYRA RAVENHAIR NO LONGER EXISTED.
EVENBLADE'S GIRLFRIEND NO LONGER EXISTED.

...MY GIRLFRIEND NO LONGER EXISTED....
CAMMY.

CAMMY'S CELL PHONE DIDN'T WORK. NO SUCH NUMBER.
HER JOB HAD NO RECORD OF HER AND HER MOM DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS. SHE ASKED IF THIS WAS A JOKE... SHE HAD TWO SONS, NO DAUGHTERS.

ON MY WAY OUT, THREE PEOPLE CALLED ME BY A PRIVATE NICKNAME I'D ONLY REVEALED TO KYRA.
THE CRAZY OLD MAN WHO BEGS ON OUR STOOP ASKED AFTER HORKUN THE MINOTAUR.

DESPERATE, I WENT TO HER OFFICE BUT OF COURSE SHE WASN'T THERE.
I DEMANDED TO SEE HER DESK, SEE HER BOSS, SEE ANYTHING THAT WOULD PROVE ME WRONG.

HAD TO KNOW. HAD TO KNOW.
HER DESK. I RAN PAST THE RECEPTIONIST, HOPING TO FIND CAMMY AT HER DESK.

INSTEAD, I FOUND TYLER.
TYLER WAS SITTING IN CAMMY'S DESK. HE SAID THAT HE'S BEEN OCCUPYING THIS DESK FOR TWO MONTHS.
AS SECURITY DRAGGED ME FROM THE BUILDING, TYLER GOT OFF THE TELEPHONE LONG ENOUGH TO SMILE, WINK, AND THROUGH THE ECHOING SILENCE IN MY EAR I HEARD HIM SAY:
TYLER STERNBERG
MARKETING
XIT

"GOOD TO MEET YOU, BUDDY."
"MY BEST TO EVERYONE AT THE PALADIN'S KEEP."

CAMMY'S THINGS WERE GONE BY THE TIME I GOT HOME.
AT FIRST I THOUGHT SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE TAKEN THEM... BUT THERE WASN'T EVEN ANY DUST, ANY FILTH LEFT BEHIND. IT WAS AS IF CAMMY HAD NEVER LIVED HERE.

AS IF SHE HAD NEVER EXISTED.

AFTER THAT, I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE BEING ANDY VERY MUCH.
NO SECRETS. NO MONEY. NO GIRLFRIEND. IT WAS HARDLY LIVING.
LOADING

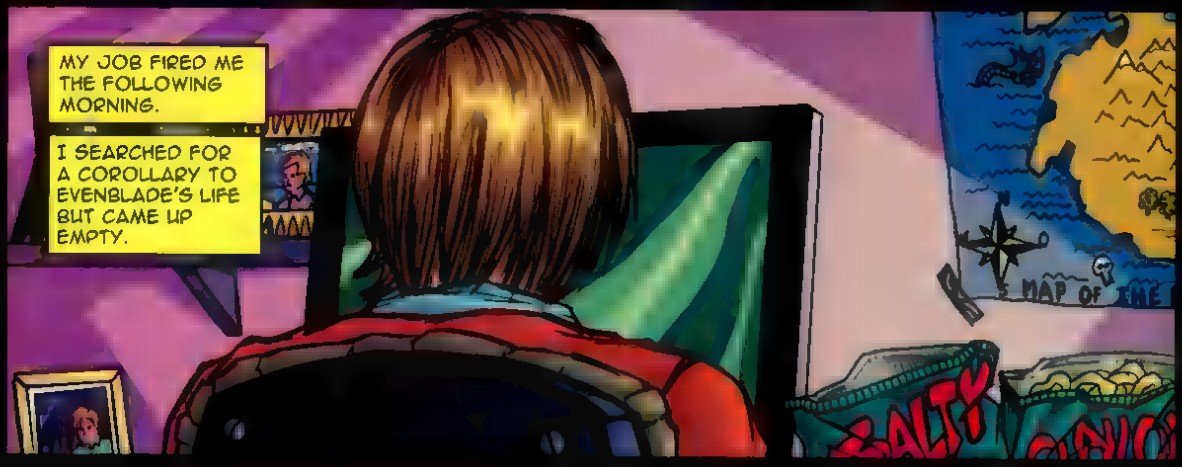
TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE SPENDING TIME IN EVENBLADE'S LIFE, EITHER.
THERE WAS SO MUCH OF ANDY IN IT THAT IT HARDLY FELT ADVENTUROUS AND INSPIRING.

MY LIVES HAD INTERTWINED. MY WORLDS COLLIDED.
AND I COULD FIND NO SOLACE, NO COMFORT IN EITHER.

HORKUN DRAGGED ME ON A FEW QUESTS, BUT MY HEART WASN'T IN IT.
ANDY'S HEART WASN'T IN IT.

EVERY MOVE ON THE CONTINENT HAUNTED MY WAKING HOURS, AND SO I BARELY SLEPT.
I COULDN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE, FOR FEAR OF WHAT I'D FIND.
SALTY CHIPS

AND I WOULDN'T LEAVE THE GAME, AFRAID OF MISSING THE ANSWERS I HOPED TO FIND.

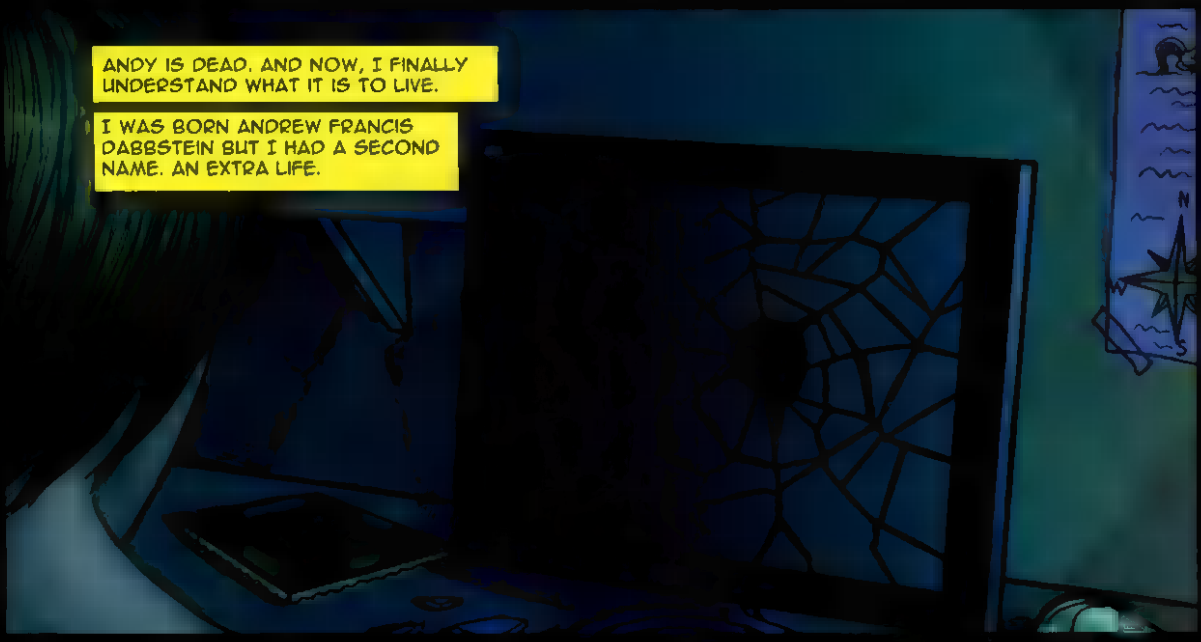

MY JOB FIRED ME THE FOLLOWING MORNING.
I SEARCHED FOR A COROLLARY TO EVENBLADE'S LIFE BUT CAME UP EMPTY.
MAP OF THE

IN FACT, HORKUN SUGGESTED WE REFILL OUR FELLOWSHIP AND CHEER ME UP WITH AN ADVENTURE.
AFRAID OF THE CONSEQUENCES, I SAID NO... BUT TO BE HONEST, I WAS BORED WAITING FOR ANSWERS THAT WEREN'T COMING.

AND, OF COURSE, NEVER WOULD.
IT WAS EVENBLADE THE PALADIN, EVENBLADE THE STRONG, WHO WENT INTO BATTLE...

...BUT IT WAS ANDREW FRANCIS DABBSTEIN THAT DIED, STRUCK FROM BEHIND ON THE BALROGTH PLAINS.

THAT WAS TWELVE HOURS AGO.



MY NAME IS EVENBLADE AND ONCE I ROAMED THE OGRE CONTINENT.
TWELVE HOURS AGO, I LOST MY LIFE.
SITTING HERE, ARMED AND READY, ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS HOW TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.
HOW TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING FOR REAL.
END

YOU KNOW, KIDDIES, I CAN'T GET WHAT ANDY'S PROBLEM IS! WHO SAYS *REALITY* IS ALL IT'S *CRACKED UP* TO BE?
BUT I CAN'T *RECOMMEND* SOCIALIZING IN THE *OGRE CONTINENT* – THOSE OGRES CAN BE SUCH *BACK-STABBERS!*
NOW, THE *OLD WITCH*, SHE WASTES ENDLESS HOURS ONLINE IN THE *WORLD OF WARTCRAFT!*
I'LL JUST KEEP AVOIDING THOSE *GHASTLY GHOULUNATICS* BY HANGING HERE – AT LEAST UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN IN THE NEXT TOTALLY *REAL* ISSUE OF *TALES FROM THE CRYPT!* *HAHAHAHAHAH!*

Greetings, CRETINS! It's me again, the ol' Crypt-Keeper. Welcome to another go-round of CRAZED CRITICISM and BOMBASTIC BRICKBATS regarding our previous IGNOMINIOUS issues!

But before opening up that can of INVERTEBRATES, let's review the REVOLTING results of your voting on TALES FROM THE CRYPT #3. It was yet another CHILLINGLY CLOSE race, but somehow "A MURDERIN' IDOL" by MANIACAL Mort Todd and SHUDDERIN' Steve Mannion managed to eke out a victory as the issue's favorite SCARE-TALE over "SLABBED!" by Stefan Petrucha and Don Hudson.

If you somehow missed our TERRIFYING third issue, the EVIL GENIUSES over at Papercutz have already collected it and other FEAR-FABLES into paperback and hardcover collections entitled TALES FROM THE CRYPT #2 "Can You Fear Me Now?" It, along with TALES FROM THE CRYPT #1 "Ghouls Gone Wild!" should be on shelves of better BOOkstores now.

Subject: Tales From The Crypt #2

I have only caught up with you on the second issue and I can't tell you how delighted I am that you are back for a new run! Ever since I learned about EC comics a few years back I have been intrigued in reading some of those classic creepy comics, and it was a pity that Bill Gaines persistently refused to resurrect them. I am glad that somebody has finally done so.

I thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Exes' artwork in "The Garden": I thought it gave the feel that the story was taking place in some bizarre video game. [SPOILER WARNING: Don't read the rest of this email if you haven't already read TALES FROM THE CRYPT #2]I liked the poetic justice that the suicide bomber committed his crime in order to get into paradise. He got his wish, but then found out it was really hell in paradise clothing!

It was an ingenious plot twist in "The Tenant" whereby the cheapskate landlord is forced to make improvements without breaking the conditions of his sentence that stipulate he must not do so: legally, the graveyard was not his property, so it was not breaking conditions to make improvements to the graveyard. Being forced to make these improvements was what really improved the landlord, but that did not save him from serving a sentence within a sentence.

I shall be looking forward to future issues.

Briony Coote
New Zealand

Thanks, Briony! "The Tenant" had a moral we can all appreciate -- that a tidy tomb is a happy tomb!

Subject: Hope and Fear for the Crypt series

Hi, I've been a longstanding EC fan-addict since I was 12 (now 33). When at a comicon I bought an original issue because the cover looked interesting - this was before the HBO series! I fell in love right away.

Yesterday I found your new series on the shelf at the comic shop. I felt an immediate thrill (Wow! New TALES FROM THE CRYPT stories!) and at the same time fear (Uh-oh, is this gonna be any good? Will it do justice to the original?)

After reading the first paperback (and I am about to start on issue 3 after I finish this email), my verdict was

somewhere in the middle. I so much want this to be the best comic it can be, because I love comics and I love the EC horrors especially. You have so much potential here! The only story I found up to par was "The Tenant" and judging by your letters in issue 3, that is the consensus. The first story in the book, "Body of Work" had me feeling especially frustrated. Such a good start, a great premise...then an ending that was just wasted! Why didn't you SHOW the faces of the corpses and their resemblance to the portraits? AND YOU MISSED AN OBVIOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR A GREAT GAG: The corpses should have taken the paintings back to the graveyard and hung them in the mausoleum! They could have given the artist (Jack Kroll) a post-mortem exhibit! And you know how the value of art goes up after an artist dies! His paintings would have sold out - no coffin should be without one!

I shall continue buying your "TALES" for a while at least, always optimistic to catch some of the magic.

Yakov Levi

Hey, Yakov as "a longstanding EC fan-addict" of 21 years, you have our permission to sit down already! But what makes you think we'd ever go for the "OBVIOUS" gag?

Subject: Crypt-Keepers Corner!!!!!

Hey, what's up, y'all? We wanted to give your team a big thumbs up for having the guts to bring TALES FROM THE CRYPT back. What about THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE CRYPT OF TERROR, THE HAUNT OF FEAR? Man, that would be hot as hell if you published those as well. I'd buy 'em, actually any EC comic would be exciting, CRIME SUSPENSE, SHOCK SUSPENSE, etc. Now, my nephew and I are real excited about these comics, and hope you continue strong. My suggestion is if your going to have somewhat weak stories, and only 2 stories per mag you are going to have to make up for it in the quality of paper stock and front cover artwork. The artwork for issue 2 is absolutely awesome. I bought like 6 of that issue. Now, in regards to the paper stock – man, you guys are cheap. I have to buy at least 2 of each issue because just reading your mag for a couple of minutes my fingerprints get etched into the ink and ruin the comic. The ink smears. Hey, when are you guys coming out with a hologram, foil, multi-colored variant and limited edition covers. Variant covers would be great, my nephew and I would buy all of em!!!!!!

Keep Up The Good Work !!!

Master Tillman Pink III
Manueal Mendoza
Los Angeles, California

Flattery will get you nowhere, Master Tillman and Manueal. TALES FROM THE CRYPT is the same comic as THE CRYPT OF TERROR, while we're waiting to hear what other EC Fan-addicts think about reviving those other TERROR-TITLES. If you like STIFF covers, why not simply buy our HARDCOVER editions? As for limited edition covers, starting with this very issue we have two different comicbook covers – one with a US price and the other with a Canadian price! I expect you and your nephew to keep your word and buy 'em both – even if it means a trip up North! As for HORRORgrams, SPOILED, and MUTILATED limited edition covers, I suspect there's no cheap sales gimmick those PINHEADS at Papercutz won't try!

Subject: new TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Hey, I heard about you on NPR. Any plans for the HAUNT or VAULT? I'll tell everyone I know. I'm sending the link to your site (www.papercutz.com) to my distribution list. Hope you can get some more airtime, like the bit I heard today on NPR. I'm a big CRYPT fan (comics, movies, and TV), have the Russ Cochran hardbound collections, am constantly checking Ebay for more and this was the first I had heard of your product.

Good luck. Taking subscriptions yet?

Bill Shaw

NPR? Around here that means NAUSEATING PULSATING REMAINS! You probably mean the ultra-short feature Nina GreGORY produced on Halloween for Morning Edition on National Public Radio, which featured my idiot editor, Jim Salicrup.

As for subsCRYPTtions, just send us a check or money order, in US funds only, for $24.00 for a one-year, six-issue subscription to TALES FROM THE CRYPT. Subscriptions begin with the next issue published after we receive your order.

Thus concludes another rousing intellectual DISSECTION regarding the greatest horror comicbook series ever! Don't miss next issue featuring the GROSSEST story yet – "Ignoble Rot" by Fred Van Lente and Steve Mannion, as well as "Queen of the Vampires" by Marc Bilgrey and Mr. Exes.

Keep those emails and letters coming! Tell us what you thought of this freaky, fan-offending fourth issue. Send your letters to:

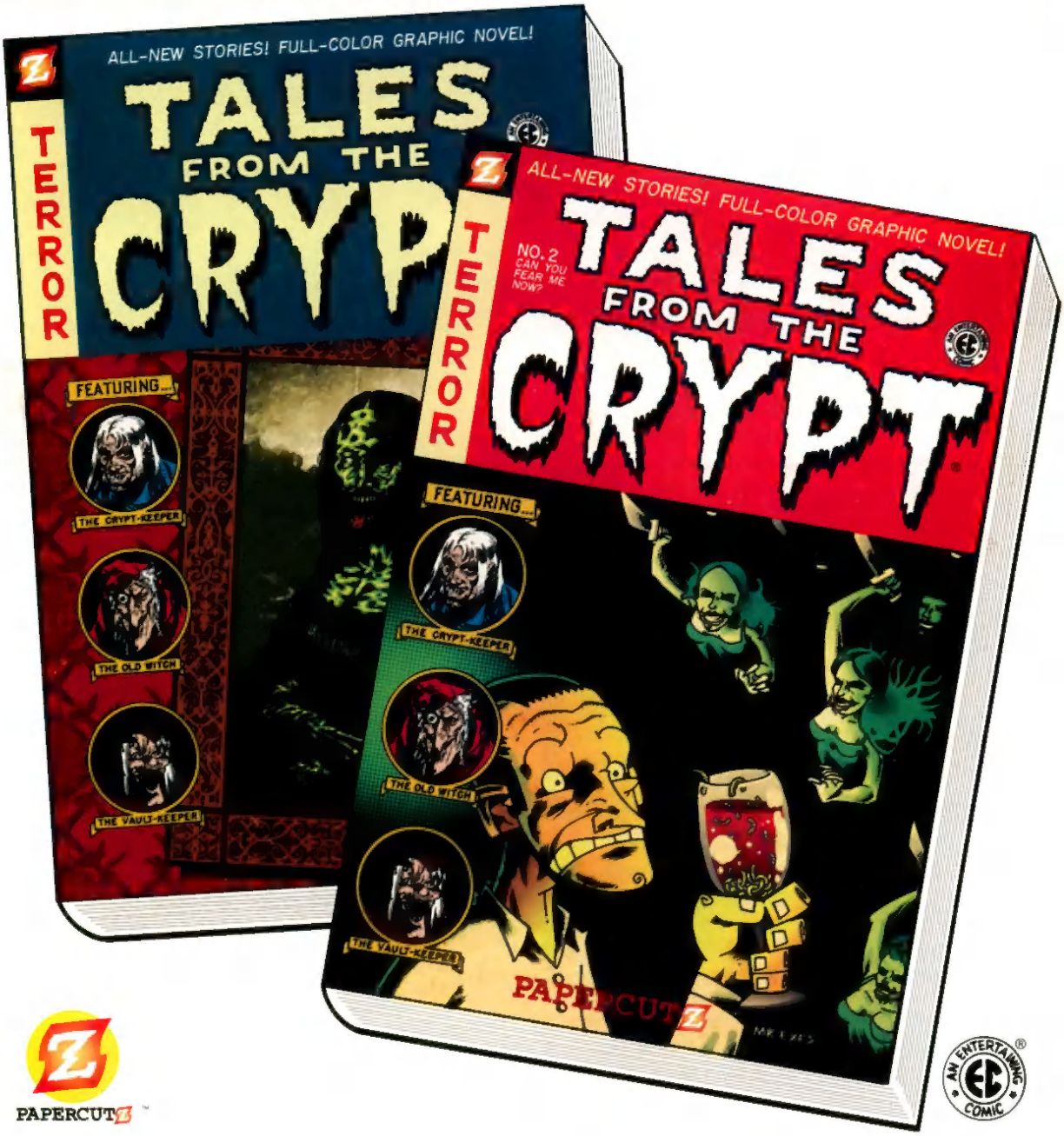
The Crypt-Keeper's Corner
40 Exchange Place, Suite 1308
New York, NY 10005

Or email your savage commentaries or rage-filled reviews to our illiterate editor at: salicrup@papercutz.com.

E.C. FANS!

YOU'VE WRITTEN!
YOU'VE E-MAILED!
YOU'VE PHONED!
YOU'VE THREATENED US!
YOU'VE DEMANDED!

(But we're coming out with these collections anyway!)



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